

## Mildura Christian College

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# Bullying & Harassment Policy

At Mildura Christian College, students are taught and expected to respect the rights of others in accordance with Christian principles taught in the Scriptures.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."  
*Philippians 2:3-5*

"The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself'."  
*Galatians 5:14*

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."  
*Colossians 3:12-14*

Consistent with the ethos of the college, harassment/bullying is not an acceptable form of behaviour. Staff and students of this college have the right to work and study without suffering from harassment/bullying.

### Harassment/Bullying

From National Safe Schools Framework: "Bullying is when a student repeatedly and deliberately tries to harm, humiliate or distress another student." Bullying can take many forms such as damaging reputation, physically hurting, spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, name calling, or deliberate social exclusion."  
McGrath, H (2003)

From *Bullying No Way!* ([www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au))

*Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status.*

*Bullying and harassment:*

- *may be physical (hitting, kicking, pinching), verbal (name-calling, teasing), psychological (standover tactics, gestures), social (social exclusion, rumours, putdowns) or sexual (physical, verbal or nonverbal sexual conduct)*
- *may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge*
- *have an element of threat*
- *can continue over time*
- *are often hidden from adults*
- *will be sustained if adults or peers do not take action.*

### Dealing with Harassment/Bullying at Mildura Christian College

1. Staff should:

- Act as role models
- Be observant of signs of bullying and take appropriate action minimising further risk to the victim
- Report actual and suspected incidents of bullying to the student's supervisor

Repeated incidents of harassment/bullying to be reported to the Principal.

2. Students should:

- Refrain from using bullying tactics.
- Discourage other students from using bullying tactics.
- Be encouraged to report the incident or suspected incident to a teacher.

3. Parents are strongly encouraged to report incidents of bullying occurring or suspected incidents to supervisors or the Principal. Parents should support the College in its endeavours to minimise harassment/bullying.

The following information appears in each student's diary:

Bullying is a form of abuse that occurs when an individual or group is subjected to behaviour that is hurtful and/or threatening either physically or psychologically. It may be planned, spontaneous, or even unintentional.

***Bullying may be:***

- Verbal, including name-calling, teasing, racist remarks, sexist comments, put downs, etc
- Non-verbal, such as obscene gestures or inappropriate acts
- Physical, including pushing, hitting, tripping, hair pulling, stealing, hiding or damaging others' belongings etc.
- Social, such as alienating or ignoring someone or spreading rumours
- Psychological, where someone is made to feel threatened by dirty looks, staring, deliberately turning away etc.
- Sexual harassment, such as sexist comments or inappropriate acts
- E-bullying, such as inappropriate text messages, emails, chat-room gossip etc

***What can be done?***

***If you are being bullied:***

- Try to control your actions
- Do not retaliate
- Ask the person to stop
- Leave the area
- Seek a safe place that is well supervised
- Don't isolate yourself
- Tell someone
- Seek help

***If you see someone being bullied:***

- Speak out
- Don't join in
- Don't be a spectator
- Support the person being bullied
- Encourage the person being bullied to seek help
- Let someone know what is happening

***E-Bullying or Cyberbullying***

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, mobile phone text messages, instant messaging, and defamatory personal websites in order to cause harm or offence to others.

To prevent cyberbullying you should:

- Never give out personal information such as your address, phone number, passwords, PIN numbers etc.
- Use netiquette
- Avoid opening a message from someone you don't know



Mildura Christian College conducts annual training/information sessions for both students and staff to help identify bullying, and provide strategies to help avoid it. In addition, supervisors are to regularly refer the students to the above information in their diaries and provide age appropriate explanation. Students are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to their parents, supervisor, and/or principal. Opportunity is also provided for students to anonymously identify those who engage in bullying tactics whether the victim be them or someone else. Students must be given opportunity to voice their concerns and must be confident that their complaint has been heard and will be appropriately dealt with.

### **Action plan for dealing with harassment/bullying**

#### **LEVEL 1**

Any reports of Harassment/Bullying will be dealt with initially by the supervisor who, after proper investigation will provide counselling to all parties involved. Penalties may apply depending on the circumstances. The severity of penalties will depend on the nature of the offence. Warnings will be issued and a report of the incident will be sent to the parents of the offending child. Parents of the victim are to be informed at the discretion of the supervisor. A report of the incident and the action taken should be provided for the Principal.

#### **LEVEL 2**

Further incidents of harassment/ bullying will result in penalties given by the Principal and a report of all incidents will be given to the Principal. Parents of the offender will be asked to come up to the school for an interview with senior staff. Penalties will apply depending on the circumstances. The severity of penalties will depend on the nature of the offence. The offender will be expected to undergo counselling with a school-appointed counsellor for an appropriate length of time. Counselling may also involve the victim, depending on the circumstances. Parents of the victim are to be informed at the discretion of the Principal.

#### **LEVEL 3**

Further offences will result in suspension, followed by counselling by the Principal and/or School-appointed Counsellor.

#### **LEVEL 4**

Repeated offences may result in expulsion.

#### **Penalties**

Penalties will be consistent with the school's Behaviour Management policy and may include:

- Out-of-school hours detention
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Next Review: January, 2019

